



NOVA SCOTIA

Human Rights Commission

2010 - 2011 French-Language Services Plan
Submitted March 2010

Message from the Director & CEO

I am pleased to submit the 2010-2011 French-language Services Plan for the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission. The Commission is committed to contributing to fulfilling the Government's obligations pursuant to the *French-Language Services Act* and Regulations.

The Commission aims for excellence in the delivery of its dual mandate - human rights dispute resolution and eliminating barriers to full participation in society through education, training and consultation, including policy advice. This requires enhancing our understanding of the diverse groups in the province, including Acadians and Francophones, and building strong relationships with government, academic institutions, civil society and the public to better meet the needs of all the people we serve.

The accessibility of information on human rights in French for Acadians and Francophones is very important in promoting language rights and providing access to justice.

The Commission is working actively to enhance its services in French at all stages of the dispute resolution process. As part of this year's plan we have set goals to continue to support staff in their efforts to increase their French language skills and promote opportunities to practice French.

We will continue to pursue opportunities to partner with Acadians and Francophones and establish plans for a forum to be held in 2011-2012. We hope that this initiative and our efforts will contribute to the promotion and preservation of the language and culture of the Acadian and Francophone people in Nova Scotia.

Krista Daley,
Director & CEO

Responses to French Requests (Written and Oral)

Inquiry / Intake Services

The Human Rights Commission responds to phone inquiries and provides information to the public on human rights issues mainly through its phone service in the Halifax office, through distribution of print material and the website. Staff are directed to provide service in French, or make available service in French, to all callers and walk-in clients who request or need service in French. Our primary inquiry/intake officer can communicate in French both orally and in writing. This unit is assisted by other staff and students from the Commission who refer clients to French speaking staff as necessary.

Written Correspondence / Print Materials / Website

All written correspondence in French received by the Commission are replied to in French. Currently the intake forms are only available in English and a goal for 2010-2011 is to have them updated, translated and available in French.

The *Human Rights Act* and all of the Commission's print brochures are available in French. They provide information on human rights and explain the services of the Commission.

The Commission has redeveloped its website and a second phase is being planned to offer a bilingual website with all material available in French. A plan will be developed over the coming year to do the phase-in of the French version of website material. Currently, the Nova Scotia *Human Rights Act* and all brochures are in French.

Investigation / Mediation

Complaint investigation is a highly technical process that requires knowledge of and the ability to describe investigation techniques, legal theory and Commission policies. Attracting individuals who can perform these functions in both official languages has proven to be elusive. However, several existing Human Rights Officers are seeking to improve their capacity to function in French. As training seats become available, these officers will work toward their goal of increased fluency. In the interim, internal and external resources are accessed by officers to ensure the needs of French-speaking clients are met.

The Commission maintains a roster of eight external mediators. Although none of the roster mediators currently have French capacity, building this capacity has been identified as a priority. In the event that a French-speaking mediator is required, there is the ability to sole source and the Commission knows persons who can fulfill the requirements.

Training / Public Events / Media

Training and public events are generally conducted in English. Promotional material for public events, such as posters and brochures, are distributed in French.

The Director and CEO is bilingual and can conduct public speaking engagements in French. One of the Commissioners has French as a first language and is available to conduct public speaking engagements in French.

Media releases involving Board of Inquiry decisions or other matters of relevance are distributed in French. The Director and CEO has conducted media interviews in French.

The Commission will be examining how to increase its capacity to deliver training sessions in French as part of next year's business planning process.

French-Language Service Inventory

The Commission currently employs 24 people and operates provincially with three offices: a central office in Halifax and regional offices in Sydney and Digby. The Commission is striving to increase the capacity of its staff to provide services in French.

The Commission also administers a roster of eight mediators who conduct mediations in different parts of the province. Currently nine Commissioners, serving on a part-time basis, come from diverse backgrounds and from different regions of the province. In addition, Board of Inquiry Panel Chairs make decisions on human rights cases.

Currently there are a number of staff who can communicate in French and competency levels vary. The Director and CEO is bilingual, one of the Human Rights Officers working with Inquiry/Intake service is functionally bilingual, and one Manager can also speak French. There have been a number of changes of our staffing composition which has reduced our bilingual capacity.

The Commission has been providing support to staff to enhance their language competency in both written and oral French. During 2009-2010, few members of staff participated in French language courses, but we are hoping this will improve in 2010-2011. The information on French language training is always circulated and staff have already registered for the next session.

The Commission has a number of brochures available in French. The Commission is in the process of updating all of the public information brochures and will have them available in French.

- \$ *Human Rights Act* - Loi sur les droits de la personne
- \$ Basic Guide to the work of the Commission - Guide de base sur le travail de la Commission des droits de la personne de la Nouvelle-Écosse
- \$ Guide to the Complaint Process - Guide de la procédure de traitement des plaintes
- \$ Introduction to Settlement Initiatives - Introduction aux initiatives de règlement des plaintes
- \$ Guide to Mediation, One Option for Settling Complaints - Guide de la médiation, une option pour régler les plaintes

- \$ For Employers, a guide for drafting job application forms and interview questions - Pour les employeurs, guide de rédaction des formulaires de demande d'emploi et des questions d'entrevue
- \$ Workshops and Training through the Race Relations, Equity and Inclusion Division - Ateliers et formation offerts par la Division des relations interraciales et de l'action positive de la Commission des droits de la personne de la Nouvelle-Écosse
- \$ Plan for Dispute Resolution of Aboriginal Complaints - Plan pour l'investigation et la résolution des plaintes déposées par des Autochtones and the Executive Summary - Résumé
- \$ Tent cards promoting the Commission

Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 2009-2010

Objectives	Expected Results: 2005-2009 French-language Services Strategic Plan	Goals and Objectives - 2009-2010	Planned Measures 2009-2010	Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 2009-2010
<u>Objective 1</u> Strengthening the policy, regulatory, and administrative framework in	1.1 The Office of Acadian Affairs and the Minister fulfill their obligations pursuant to the	Contribute to the Government's annual progress report on French-language services.	Progress Report submitted on French-language services.	Submitted a progress report on French-language services.

support of the <i>French-language Services Act</i> .	<i>French-language Services Act</i> .			
	1.2 Increased capacity for government to support departments/offices in the delivery of French-language services.	Provide opportunities for staff to learn French.	Number of training opportunities and number of staff who participate in French-language training.	All staff expressed an interest in taking French lessons, none did so in 2009-2010.
		Track ability of staff to speak other languages including French.	Include question on other languages as part of internal self-identification survey.	A question was added to the self-identification survey and half of staff responded that they have 2 nd language abilities.
		Increase number of staff with French-language fluency.	Number of new staff with French-language fluency.	A new manager was hired who can speak French. Overall increase was not met as some bilingual staff left.

<u>Objective 2</u> Consultation with the community.	2.1 Establishment and prioritization of the French-language services to be offered, and of strategies or approaches for service delivery.	Engage in partnerships with Acadian and Francophone stakeholders	Number of collaborations, consultations and partnering on events.	During the year, there was representation on the Employment Equity Partnership Project (EEP) at the advisory level. Employment Equity survey was sent to organizations in French.
<u>Objective 3</u> Communicating, sharing information,	3.1 Public information is available in both official languages	Make available print material in French on human right information	Materials on human rights information and the services of the Commission	Provided information on the <i>Human Rights Act</i> and dispute resolution process

promoting services available in French.	of Canada.	and the services of the Commission.	translated into French and made available to the public.	in French. Made available all pamphlets in French and English at approximately 15 training workshops throughout the province. Continued to print and offer all seven information pamphlets and the <i>Human Rights Act</i> . The <i>Human Rights Act</i> (including all relevant amendments) was translated and posted on website.
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	3.2 Employees and the public are more aware of the approach being taken by the government to provide French-language services.	Advertise public events in French as well as English.	Press releases, posters and other promotional materials translated into French and made available to the public.	Made available all information pamphlets and <i>Human Rights Act</i> on website in French and English. Distributed press releases in both French and English for events such as the International Day of the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and on decisions of particular relevance. Developed posters
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<u>Objective 4</u> Supporting French-language services development, planning, and delivery in priority areas.	4.1 Some departments / offices develop and adapt plans and strategies for French-language service delivery as part of their annual planning process.	Ensure clients requesting service in French can be served in French at all stages of the dispute resolution process including at the inquiry/intake, investigation, and mediation stages and at the Board of Inquiry.	Number of clients who request service in French and receive service in French.	in French and English for advertised events. Responded to two inquiries in French to French speaking clients.
	4.2 The government has a coordinated approach to deal with human resources issues related to the delivery of French-language services.	Establish goals to increase capacity for French-language as part of Equity Plan and Business Plan.	Goals established as part of Employment Equity Plan and Business Plan to recruit and retain diverse staff, and recruit Roster mediator fluent in French. Provide language training for staff.	Developed goals to recruit and retain diverse staff and mediators including a mediator fluent in French and support French-language training for staff.
	4.3 Service delivery corresponds to the objectives outlined in the Global Development Plan for Acadians and Francophones 4.4 Schools and community centres contribute to the growth of the Acadians and Francophones.	Establish protocols to ensure accommodation of clients who need service in French to ensure fair process.	Protocols established to ensure clients receive service in French to ensure a fair process.	Policy manual will be revised to include protocols at all stages of the dispute resolution process to ensure fair process.

Goals, Objectives, and Measures for 2010-2011

Objectives	Expected Results: 2010-2011 French Language Services Strategic Plan	Goals and Objectives 2010-2011	Planned Measures 2010-2011
<u>Objective 1 - Framework and Policy</u> Strengthen the policy, regulatory, and administrative framework in support of the <i>French- language Services Act</i> .	1.1 The Office of Acadian Affairs, the Minister, and designated public institutions fulfill their obligations pursuant to the <i>French-language Services Act</i> and Regulations. This includes the required review of the Regulations before July 31, 2010 to evaluate their effectiveness in ensuring substantive and measurable improvement	Contribute to the Government=s annual progress report on French-language services.	Progress Report submitted on French- language services.

<u>Objective 2 - Enabling French-language Services</u> Consult, plan, develop, and deliver French-language services in priority areas.	to the French-language services offered by the Government of Nova Scotia. 1.2 Designated public institutions have implemented all sections of the Regulations. 2.1 Designated public institutions deliver services that respond to the priority needs of Acadians and Francophones as identified through consultation.	Ensure all clients who request or need service in French at all stages of the dispute resolution process received services in French. Plan a human rights forum in conjunction with Acadian and Francophone stakeholders to promote understanding of issues they face.	Number of clients who request or need services in French and receive service in French. Plan is in place and funding is received.
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	2.2 Public service employees are more knowledgeable about the approach being taken by government to provide French-language services; are more sensitive to cultural issues pertaining to Acadian and Francophones; and promote public awareness of French-language services and their availability. 2.3 The public is more aware of the approach being taken by the government to provide French-language services and of the programs and services available to them.	Request and use materials from the Bonjour! Program within the Commission. Liaise with Acadian and Francophone stakeholders. Plan and begin implementation of a bilingual website with translation of priority materials. Provide reception signage in French.	Materials from the Bonjour! Program received and actively used. Commission has liaised with stakeholders for the EEP survey. Plan established and translation of priority materials. All signs now in English will also be visible in French in the reception
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		Once amended, translate intake forms into French and make available to French clients. Use sole source procurement if a French speaking BOI or mediator is required. Increase opportunities for staff to learn and use French.	area. Intake forms available in French and distributed as necessary. Any mediation or BOI that should be held in French is held in French. Number of staff who participate in French-language courses and other activities to learn and use French.
	2.4 Prioritization and establishment of French-language services to be offered, and of strategies or approaches for service delivery.		

<u>Objective 3 - Community Development and Capacity-Building</u> Ensure that Acadians and Francophones have resources available for its long-term development and sustainability	2.5 The capacity of the public services in French has increased due to the recruitment, evaluation, and training in place. 3.1 Government has helped Acadian and Francophone community-based organizations, where appropriate, realize their objectives expressed in the community=s Global Development Plan. 3.2 Acadian and Francophone schools and community centres offer services and programs to Acadians and Francophones.	Enhance ability to provide services at all stages of dispute resolution process in French including mediation Participate as a member of the Advisory Panel for the EEP survey which was sent to Acadian and Francophone stakeholders.	Ability exists to provide services at all stages of dispute resolution process in French including mediation. Develop further partnerships with Acadian and Francophone stakeholders to promote understanding of issues faced by the community.
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